ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF CANADA,

BY THE

REFORM ASSOCIATION;

Adopted at a General Meeting, held at the Association Rooms, at Toronto, the 16th Day of May, 1844.

THE HON. ADAM FERGUSSON,

OF WOODHILL, IN THE CHAIR.

TORONTO:

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THE HON. ADAM FERGUSSON, OF WOODHILL, IN THE CHAIR.

Fellow-Subjects and Fellow-Colonists:

In the present condition of the Executive Government and of the public affairs of this Province we think it our duty to address you.

Were that Government conducted with the advice of a Council possessing, or pretending to possess the confidence of your Representatives—to these Representatives we should leave the task of discovering and correcting the faults and abuses of Exetive power—well knowing that to you it may be safely left, to exercise your elective franchise with patriotism and discretion, and through that means to obtain and preserve to yourselves the full enjoyment of the rights and liberties of British subjects.

We know that if the destruction of the Constitution of this Colony were openly attempted, you would think no duty so sacred as that of rallying in its defence, and no sacrifices too great which might be required in a cause so good and so holy. But open attempts for such a purpose are seldom made: it is through the people themselves that their rights are most commonly invaded. To degrade a free people, their own assent is necessary: to procure that assent no means are more usually resorted to, than the adoption of popular sentiments so qualified as to be practically useless, and the application of terms of reproach against the friends of the people, from which weak and timid men may shrink, and under pretence of which corrupt men may abandon the cause of their country. These are the devices now used; the

like have had temporary success in other countries; they have more than once succeeded even in this. Whether you will be betrayed by them again, depends upon yourselves.

We, the Reform Association of Canada formed of, from, and by yourselves, for the constitutional defence of your guaranteed and acknowledged privileges, have assumed the duty of keeping watch over your liberties, because they are attacked from a quarter to which you should be able to look for protection and support. From the performance of this duty we are not to be driven by reproach or intimidated by threatenings;—for the cause we contend for is strong in your affections—and it is just, lawful and loyal.

The grievances and discontents under which the Provinces which now constitute United Canada laboured, for many years arose either from the wilful misconduct, or from the errors of Executive Governments over which *the people had no control.* Popular complaints of bad Government in the Colonies, were listened to in the Mother Country tardily and reluctantly. When remedy was proposed it was inadequate—and evils sprung up faster than any means which could be used for their correction. The Colonies were always complaining of grievances unredressed, and the Imperial Government were continually in the condition of either denying redress altogether, or of attempting redress, without opportunity of investigation or understanding of the evils complained of. In this unhappy state of affairs, the Imperial Administration, which had no interest to serve in the oppression of the Colonists, became *identified with local mis-government.* A constant contention and discord arose between the Local Legislatures and the Executive: this discord subsisted with a constancy possible only in mis-governed Colonies;—until at length nothing good was hoped from appeals to England; and complaints however well founded were there unjustly set down as symptoms of disaffection—as results of a secret desire for separation and independence.

The people of Canada at length sought the true remedy. They discovered that they had not practically the British Constitution, and that without the practical administration of that Constitution, a representation in the Legislature was worse than useless. Relinquishing therefore altogether minor and endless complaints, they sought for the establishment of one simple, Constitutional and British principle, namely, that the Prerogative of the Crown

in the Colony respecting local affairs, should be administered *as in England* with the advice of ministers, who should hold themselves responsible for the acts of Government, and who should not shelter themselves from a responsibility for such acts, while they chose to remain public servants, under the plea of ignorance, or of direction or command from any quarter.

The people of Canada never sought in this system of Government the subserviency of the Representative of their Sovereign. On the contrary, they looked to whomsoever might be entrusted with the exercise of the Royal Prerogative in this Colony, for a careful and wise administration of their affairs: for exposure of corruption if it should be found to exist: and for resistance of unwise policy, if such should be attempted: they desired to place no blind confidence in any men, nor would they sustain any in wrong. And they knew that a Governor of this Colony could never in vain call upon them to consider with severe justice the counsel of his constitutional advisers.

It was with great and almost universal joy that the people of Canada hailed the Resolutions moved and passed in the Legislative Assembly in September 1841. They looked upon these Resolutions, acquiesced in by Her Majesty's Government, as confirming to them and to their posterity forever, under the guarantee of the Empire, the great principle of Responsible Government.

The people of Canada saw with the greatest satisfaction this principle carried out under the administration of the late lamented Sir Charles Bagot, and consented to by all parties in the Colony, who looked forward thenceforth to fair and legitimate Constitutional Government, conducted with the advice of known and Responsible Ministers, whose continuance in office would depend upon the maintenance of popular confidence, which would be the result of the success of their measures of Government, and would be withdrawn if these measures were wanting in honesty and discretion.

The people of Canada saw with alarm and regret the resignation of the late Executive Councillors, forced upon them by a declaration on the part of Her Majesty's Representative of an 'antagonism' between him and them, on the very principle upon which they took office, and for the assertion of which the Colonists had so long struggled. They saw with alarm and regret that the Head of the Government asserted his right to act without the advice of his Council, or contrary to their advice, without involving the necessity of their retirement; and that the assertion on their part

of their responsibility for the acts of the Government, and of the consequent necessity for their advice thereupon, was treated as the requirement of a stipulation which a Governor should not make, and as an attempt to render the Queen's Representative a subservient tool in their hands.

The people of Canada watched with great anxiety the progress of the discussions in the Provincial Parliament consequent upon the retirement of the Executive Councillors; and the resolute adhesion of the great majority of their Representatives to the principles of Responsible Government was received with joyful acclamation.

The people of Canada looked then to the Head of the Government for a new recognition of the system established in the Province—but they saw with disappointment and alarm a feeble and unconstitutional attempt made by the Governor General to carry on the business of Government by his own unadvised and direct communications with the Houses of the Legislature, and with the assistance of persons holding no position in which they could be made answerable for the Administration of public affairs.

The people of Canada daily heard the professions of the Head of the Government, of his adherence to the Constitution of Canada as interpreted by the Resolutions of the Legislative Assembly: and they looked therefore for an immediate dissolution of Parliament, and a new Election. They could not conceive the consistency of admitted Responsible Government with the administration of affairs without an Executive Council, or with a Council not possessing the confidence of the Legislative Assembly.

Nevertheless this Colony has continued without such a Council from the month of December to this time, and so it may continue for any indefinite time at the will and pleasure of the Governor General, according to his interpretation of your Constitution.

This Association now publicly addresses itself to you, that we may fully understand each other; and that, when the time at length comes, when it shall be permitted to you to exercise your Constitutional rights, there may be no misunderstanding or disagreement, and that none may be deceived, or have the excuse of being misled.

We think that the reiteration by His Excellency the Governor-General, of his wish and determination to adhere to the Resolutions of 1841, as the same are contrasted with His Excellency's acts, has scarcely deceived any one, though some persons who

were once popular, and who owed their popularity to their advocacy of Responsible Government, have made His Excellency's declarations an excuse for supporting him,—and the foundation of a pretence for adhering to Responsible Government likewise.

We ask you to observe that the bitterest enemies, both in and out of Parliament, of the system of Responsible Government, and of the Resolutions of September 1841, are now publicly supporting His Excellency, and admitting the principles hitherto denied by them. They at the same time join with the Governor-General in denouncing as disaffected and rebellious, those who uphold Responsible Government, and who say that the late members of the Executive Council were right in insisting upon the necessity of the Executive Council being advised with in all public affairs of the Province, including appointments to office.

We also ask you to observe that the same opprobious terms of disaffection and rebellion were formerly, by the same parties, indiscriminately applied to all who professed to maintain the principle of Responsible Government.

We ask you to observe that the most inconsistent doctrines are openly advocated by the several adulators of the Governor-General's interpretations of your Constitution, which interpretations pretend to the extraordinary faculty of always agreeing with the sentiments of the parties to whom they are addressed, and assume the impossible character of being true to all.

What then has His Excellency done to reconcile the opposers of Responsible Government with principles they once disavowed as rebellious? What interpretation has His Excellency put upon the Resolutions of September, 1841, to place in opposition to his policy the men who voted for these Resolutions?

We account for this reconciliation, and for this opposition as follows:—

The late Members of the Executive Council resigned Office, because by holding Office they considered themselves responsible for all the acts of the Government respecting our local affairs; because they would not be responsible for these acts unless they were advised with upon them; and because important acts of the Government were done without such advice.

His Excellency the Governor-General separated with his Councillors, because he considered that the Executive Council were to be advised with only when he saw occasion to ask their advice—because he held himself, and not the Executive Council, responsi-

ble for the acts of the Government, and because he was pleased to consider the claim advanced by the Council, to be advised with on all acts of the Government, an attempt to impair the Royal Prerogative, and to make the Governor-General a tool in the hands of the Council.

The enemies of Responsible Government saw in this declaration of His Excellency a nullification of the whole principle of Responsible Government. For if the Government could be conducted without advice of the Council, the Council could not be held responsible for the acts of the Government. And if the Governor could take the advice of any persons not in office, and act upon it in preference to taking the advice of the Council, —those who had not the confidence of the Parliament had the same opportunity of being advised with as those who possessed that confidence, the advice of the former having the same chance of being followed as the advice of the latter. Then, if the Governor's individual sentiments on political subjects were those of the minority, he would under this system follow the advice of the minority: and consequently the Constitutional advisers of the Crown would be placed in open opposition to His Excellency, or else be forced to take upon themselves the responsibility and defence of acts of which they disapproved.

If either of these cases *could exist* at the same time with the Resolutions of 1841, and with Responsible Government, there would be nothing in either, opposed to the views of the most ardent partizans of arbitrary power in the Province; and as His Excellency undertook the task of making these circumstances co-exist, and of reconciling them by his interpretations, it was not for the enemies of Responsible Government to object: for according to His Excellency's views, they had been fighting with an empty name—and as the substance would be granted to them, they gave up the contest as far as the name was concerned. They in fact continued consistent advocates for the exercise of irresponsible power—for passive dependence on the will of a Governor; and they placed Responsible Government, in His Excellency's interpretation of it, upon their banners, the moment they were convinced that. according to that interpretation, it meant nothing.

For the same reason, that is to say, because, according to the interpretation of His Excellency, Responsible Government means nothing, and because we contend for a substance and not for a

shadow, we oppose the views of His Excellency. The Governor-General has declared, that he has, ever since he came to this country, been acting upon the principles of Responsible Government as declared in the Resolutions of September, 1841. He has nevertheless carried on the Government with a Council who hold office in direct opposition to the expressed opinions of the Legislative Assembly.

We hold it to be essential to a Constitutional principle that it should prevail against all opinion, and all considerations of expediency.

His Excellency has admitted that the Resolutions of 1841 contain constitutional principles, but they are to prevail only when such shall be his will and pleasure.

According to these Resolutions we hold that his Excellency was bound to find a Council who should possess the confidence of the Provincial Parliament.

He does not say that he has found such a Council, but that he has been prevented from doing so by the efforts of persons who have opposed him.

His Excellency may have been prevented in many ways from forming a Council who should agree *with him*, or who would consent to hold office on *his terms*; but he could not by possibility be prevented from forming a Council who would possess the confidence of the Parliament, if he only felt or admitted the necessity of doing so.

The Governor-General must therefore mean that he is prevented from forming a Council possessing the confidence of Parliament—because he can form no Council which pleases him, and which possesses such confidence.

Thus the agreement of the Council with his Excellency's views, and with his pleasure, is made to form a part of the system of Responsible Government; and, as his Excellency thus justifies himself for conducting the government with a Council not possessing the confidence of parliament, for several months—the same justification must be as good, for several years, or in perpetuity; and the end is, that if his Excellency cannot make the legislature and the people of Canada see with his eyes, and understand with his judgment, they are not to have a Council possessing their confidence; and thus, the constitutional principle of Responsible Government is made to depend upon his will and pleasure—from which it follows—that the people of Canada have his Excellency's

will and pleasure, which he calls Responsible Government.

We are not surprised at his Excellency's adherence to the Resolutions of 1841, with these qualifications: neither is it extraordinary that the enemies of constitutional government should uphold his Excellency. But we wish you to ask yourselves, What have you been contending so long against, but the arbitrary and ill-advised *will and pleasure of Governors*, and whether you will be satisfied with a constitution held upon that tenure?

In one of the Governor General's late replies to a popular address, His Excellency has stated the intentions of his political opponents to be, that the whole power of the State should be usurped by the Executive Council exercising undue influence over the House of Assembly, or by the House of Assembly exercising unlimited interference in the Executive administration.

We ask you to consider what interference with a House of Assembly could be exercised by an Executive Council responsible to the Provincial Parliament, which could not be made to an equal or greater extent by a Governor General irresponsible to any power in the colony?

Whether you have not a greater power to control and check undue interference with your representatives proceeding from an Executive Council, than if the same proceeded from a source over which you possess no control whatever?

We ask you again to consider, whether the interference of your representatives in the Executive administration is not the great end and object of the system of Responsible Government And whether you are prepared to uphold an arbitrary authority, over which you have no control, for the purpose of preventing this interference.

We ask you, the people of Canada, what crime have you committed, what incapacity are you willing to acknowledge which should deprive you of a right enjoyed by every nation and people on earth who possess free institutions: namely, the right of interfering with the Executive administration? Is this the British privilege, which cannot emigrate to a colony? Your fellow subjects in England have a constitutional government which interferes in parliamentary business, and a House of Commons which possesses influence over Executive administration. The extent of that interference, and of this influence, is regulated, not by arbitrary power, but by the moderation and good sense of a free and enlightened people. We claim for Canadian colonists the same power of regulation, in their own local affairs. We ask you, do you disclaim and disavow it? The Queen of England exercises no arbitrary authority to save her parliament from the influence of her constitutional advisers, or her constitutional advisers from the interference of the people's representatives. Are you in such a condition as to require the exercise of power in the hands of the Queen's Representative here, which her Majesty does not use in her Imperial Government? The argument of Sir Charles Metcalfe must be founded on his opinion of your not being intelligent, prudent, or trust-worthy; he therefore requires a power in himself

unknown to the British Constitution. The power which he requires is, that of preserving you from your own elected representatives, and from Councils in which they have confidence; in other words, to preserve you from your own evil designs upon yourselves.

We ask you whether you admit such designs, whether you acknowledge such danger, and whether your apprehensions on these points are so strong that because of them you are induced to forego and surrender the British Constitution?

The Governor General asserts, that the constitution of Canada is the same as that of England, so far as the same can be administered in a colony. *We* understand the difference to consist in our want of power to interfere in matters affecting the empire at large, questions of peace and war, or external trade and commerce. The difference as asserted by the Governor General goes further. In a colony there must be a power unknown to the British Constitution, and constitutional advisers who may be consulted or not, at the Governor's pleasure.

The Governor General has been pleased to allude, on many occasions, to the want of an aristocracy in this colony, and to put this want forward as a reason why you should not be entrusted with the full enjoyment of the British Constitution. Of the soundness of his reasoning you will be the judges.

We shall not attempt, on this occasion, to establish or to controvert the benefits of an aristocracy in Church and State. If you want it, an aristocracy may be set up in reality as well as in name. You have only to consent to a Church Establishment, and to become tenants to noble families, instead of being proprietors yourselves. Do this, and you will forthwith have an aristocracy. We admit, you have not one at present, but we ask you, is it therefore you should be deprived of the rights and liberties of British subjects.

In England there is a House of Lords, spiritual and temporal, which, notwithstanding its forming a branch of the Legislature, and notwithstanding the great wealth and influence of its members, is rarely found to disagree with the popular House of Parliament, and which is never found to attempt the upholding an administration which has not the confidence of the House of Commons.

We ask you whether there is a necessity in this colony for a Legislative Council to exercise a greater degree of control or interference than is known to be exercised by the House of Lords in England. Is it because the Legislative Council have less influence, that they should exercise more power. Is there any constitutional principle applicable to colonies, which requires the exercise of power in an inverse proportion to natural political influence.

In England, peers of the realm are created by the Sovereign, with the advice of ministers, to whom the confidence of the Commons of England is essentially necessary.

We ask you, is there any thing in the constitution of Canada,

or in its condition, which requires the appointment of Legislative Councillors in a mode different from that observed in the creation of peers in the Mother Country.

We ask you, moreover, upon what constitutional principles the want of a spiritual and temporal aristocracy should deprive you of constitutional government.

Are not the interests of the landed proprietors, the interests of the Commons of Canada? Are not these interests as efficiently protected by the Commons of Canada, who are themselves proprietors, as they could be by the exercise of unadvised or irresponsible power in any quarter?

If the interests of the landed proprietary can be guarded by the people themselves, we ask you, what other interest is there in Canada whose protection requires the existence of an aristocracy?

And we ask you, morever, whether the want of an aristocracy, in any manner justifies the withholding from you the one great principle of Responsible Government, namely—that your public affairs should all be conducted, with the advice of officers having the confidence of your representatives in parliament?

You are told by the Governor General, that we who recommend you to adhere to advised, responsible, and constitutional government, seek to bring about a separation between this Colony and the Parent state.

We utterly deny this charge. We recognize in the fullest manner the authority of the Imperial Government and Parliament, and their right to govern, without question, all our affairs in which they can properly have any interest.

We only ask that the people of this country should influence the government of their own local affairs and interests, matters in which the Imperial Government can have no inducement to interfere; in which they never have interfered against the will of the Canadian people, without doing mischief; and in which they cannot interfere by supporting the Governors of this country in the exercise of arbitrary power, without invading the constitution of this colony, nor without a withdrawal of the Responsible Government hitherto supposed to be solemnly conceded.

We are firmly of opinion that the people of this country enjoy, in their connection with the British empire, protection, assistance, freedom, and happiness which leaves them nothing to envy in other countries. We feel a loyal attachment to our Sovereign, a love for the British constitution, and a determination that, so far as we can make it so, the connection of Canada with the British empire should be perpetuated. We see nothing hostile to this connection in the enjoyment by Canadians of the rights of Englishmen, and nothing to strengthen it in the possession of irresponsible power in the person of our Governors. We are neither to be led away from our allegiance by unfounded charges of disaffection, nor driven from our just claims by unfounded insinuations regarding our intent and purpose. We seek what we profess to seek,—the enjoyment of the British constitution. We seek to enjoy it according to its own letter, meaning and spirit, not as it

may be measured by the vague assurances of Governors. We feel that the people of Canada may and ought to be entrusted with such a constitution; if they are charged with not being loyal, intelligent, and discreet enough to enjoy it, that they should be told so distinctly, and not be asked indirectly to assent to their own degradation, or under the forms of the British constitution to submit to the domination of authority irresponsible to them, and inconsistent with all principles of free government.

The Governor General assures you that there is no reluctance on his part to consult with an Executive Council,—that with any Council that seeks the good of the country, and does not strive to degrade the office of Governor to the condition of a mere party tool, it is his Excellency's intention, as well as his duty and practice, to consult on all subjects'; that every Governor must be sensible of the advantage he would derive from the aid, advice, and information of councillors and heads of departments, in whom he could place confidence. But he speaks of the majority of the people's representatives for the time being, as "any party which may acquire a temporary ascendancy."

We have nothing to do with the Governor General's reluctances, inclinations, sensibilities, or confidences. We cannot admit that it is by these our Constitution is to be interpreted. But we see in the use of these terms a virtual denial of Constitutional government.

Our object is, that the Governor should have advisers,—that these should have the confidence of the people's Representatives—that they should be strictly responsible for all the acts of the Executive Government while they continue to hold office.

The reluctance, or absence of reluctance in a Governor to consult these advisers, can never be a question,—for he is bound to consult them. Neither can their being consulted or not rest upon the Governor's opinion as to whether or not they seek the good of the country. They are responsible for the acts of the Government, and should at all events be consulted; and neither the great majority of the present Legislative Assembly, nor any greater or smaller majority can, so long as the Governor acts with the Parliament, without an insult to the country, be treated as a party having acquired a temporary ascendancy. If the Governor General supposes the majority in Parliament does not express the opinion of the constituency, it is his duty, not to insult, but to dissolve Parliament: And if the people uphold the opinions of their representatives, all constitutional rule of judgment as to public opinion would be lost, if Governors were at liberty to stigmatize it as temporary. The Constitution has given a mode and means for the deliberate expression of the wishes of the people, and a Constitution would be a worthless form of words which would permit such expression to be slighted whenever evil advisers should presume to insinuate to a Governor that it was temporary or inconsiderate.

The Governor General is pleased to announce that the Constitution, as established by Lord Sydenham, and by the Resolutions of 1841, he is using and shall continue to use.

We cannot suppose that his Excellency means to assert that his present Advisers possess the confidence of Parliament—the opinion of Parliament, on this subject, has been already most unequivocally expressed. We ask you, then: Are you satisfied with the administration of your affairs through the advice of a Council which does not possess the confidence of Parliament? We ask you—Is this the Responsible Government for which you so long contended?

His Excellency is pleased to express a trust that his Executive Council will obtain the confidence of Parliament.

We ask you—Is it to be permitted that for month after month your Government should be unconstitutionally administered upon such a trust, a trust which involves a supposition that your representatives will retreat from the constitutional ground which they have deliberately taken, or that you will, at some future time, elect representatives of different opinions. The Governor General speaks of his endeavours to work through a Council which he is pleased to trust will obtain the confidence of Parliament. But if this cannot be successfully done, he gives you no hope of the appointment of a Council which will have the confidence of your Representatives. On the contrary, his Excellency says that the blame will be justly due to persons whom his Excellency is pleased to charge with having, in the pursuit of unbridled power, sought to destroy the constitution which they pretended to uphold.

In this declaration of the Governor-General, we plainly see held out to you, not an appeal to your opinions, but a certain threat of destruction to your Constitution; the persons designated by His Excellency can have no power, no influence but through you. As politicians they are the creatures of your will; and if they have opinions regarding your constitution, these only have weight as your opinions. It is only in *your* opinions, therefore, that obstruction to the formation of a government of the choice of the Governor-General can be found. It is to avoid your opinions that Parliament has been held prorogued for months, and the public business unconstitutionally conducted. It is to avoid *your* opinions that the dissolution of Parliament has been delayed, a dissolution which was distinctly pointed out by the circumstances which accompanied the last prorogation. It is *your* opinion which is to work the forfeiture of Responsible Government, unless you make its exercise to depend upon a Governor's reluctance, or desire, or confidence, or distrust. It is *your* opinion in favour of a Constitution to be used whenever it shall please your Ruler, which is sought for,—and which is sought to be extorted from you by threats of destruction to your Constitution.

We ask you upon this to judge of the conduct of those who have always opposed Constitutional Government in Canada—who have never been able to see any results from its establisment but treason and separation. We recommend you not to blame them. They support the Governor-General consistently with the avowed principles of their party; they violate no pledges, betray no confidences. If you uphold them as the only true, loyal, aristo-

eratic party in the Colony, vote for those who support the Governor-General; but abandon Responsible Government. Do not fear those men whom you are accustomed to call Tories; they will not persecute you, if you support them; they will give you their friendship, even their respect, if you surrender to them your Constitution.

But beware how you attach yourselves to those who are loud in their praises of Responsible Government, and who at the same time give their support to a system in which it is not to be found; for should you succeed in giving the Governor-General's interpretations the sanction of public opinion, the triumph will be to his policy and to the honest upholders of irresponsible power. The betrayers of a cause, founded upon principle, for the sake of temporary expediency, will sink into merited reproach, and you will then share in the contempt which they will find overwhelming.

If you are satisfied with such Responsible Government as is offered to you, you should pray the Governor-General to dissolve a Parliament too independent and too patriotic to represent their constituents. If you are satisfied with such a Constitution you should hail as your best friends those who have been opposed to Responsible Government, and who now support it as something dependant upon the Supreme will of a Governor-General. If you think a majority of your fellow subjects are disloyal, and unworthy of a Constitution, you who are a loyal minority should pray for the abolishment of that Constitution: disloyalty and treason deserve no representation: if your fellow subjects are traitors, they are unworthy of a Constitution.

But if you feel that, as people of Canada, you are loyal subjects of your Queen; that you love the country of your birth or your adoption and the Empire to which it belongs: if you think the majority of your fellow subjects agree in these feelings: if you think therefore, that they are worthy of the name and rights of British subjects: if you think that it was to them, as British subjects and worthy to receive it, the Constitution was given: if you think the Royal Prerogative and the Constitution will be respected by them, as both are respected in England, and that neither require any other safeguards than those required in the Mother Country: if you think the arbitrary will of a Governor no safeguard to the Royal Prerogative, and inconsistent with your rights and liberties: if you wish to know the persons under whose advice public affairs are to be conducted, and to hold them responsible to your Representatives in Parliament: if you think this is our Constitution, and that it should be observed without qualification, exception, or consideration of expediency, without regard to party or party opinions: if you think those who wrongly advise a Governor, or who improperly oppose his views for your good, may be effectually controlled by your Representatives: if you think that your Representatives may, if they support a Ministry in the wrong, be brought to account by their constituents: if you believe that this is the mode of ascertaining what is right and wrong under

your Constitution; and if you are determined to uphold that Constitution against all gainsayers—now is your time to unite firmly, temperately, and boldly, and to prepare for the contest which awaits you.

The firmness with which you have held your ground hitherto, the tranquil fortitude with which you await the time for Constitutional action, the quiet which pervades the whole frame of Society: all shew your consciousness of right and of strength.

The attempts which have been made to persuade you to surrender your privileges voluntarily, have met with no success. You know the men who have assumed the name of Freeholders and Inhabitants of Canada, and who have offered adulatory addresses to the Governor-General: you know their names, numbers, opinions, & influence to be such as neither to create surprise or alarm in your minds: and you know the pretences under which they have expected to mislead you; You have seen the whole effect of an agitation got up by your Government. Those whom it temporarily misled are returning to your ranks: those who were never before with you, are with you now: and all you want is, to be permitted constitutionally to express your conviction of right, with a certainty that it must prevail.

We recommend you to weigh and understand well the question to be submitted to you; to meet and to discuss, in every convenient manner, the various points of view in which it has been placed: to have no halting between two opinions: to allow of no indifference. This is not a mere party struggle. It is Canada against her oppressors: The people of Canada claiming the British Constitution, against those who withhold it: *the weight of public opinion against faction and corruption:* You are contending for no men or set of men, but, for principles which will form the best inheritance of your children.

Your Sovereign and the people of her Empire are not against you: but, you are foully misrepresented and maligned to them. To confirm the slanders of your accusers you have but to yield to their threats and submit to their dictation. Be firm and steadfast, and the British people will respect and support you. Be faithful to yourselves, and you may disregard all your enemies can do or say. You may and will have British Institutions, if you vote for those who uphold them.

You can only be humbled and degraded by *your own consent.* And we,—who do not address you as strangers, but as an Association formed from amongst yourselves, and who feel our principles maintained throughout the Colony, by the voice of those who form the constituency,—are warranted in saying that your consent to the desires of those who would establish anew a despotism in your country—will never be given.

(Signed)

ADAM FERGUSSON, CHAIRMAN.

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